(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir, While considering certain bail applications of accused in offenses related to sandalwood, the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala in the order dated 08.02.2005, had *inter alia,* observed that 'if some of the averments of the bail application, if accepted, will establish the nexus between the sandalwood mafia and politicians.'

LMMC for conservation of Biodiversity

3929. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and 16 other Like-Minded Megadiverse Countries (LMMC) have decided to cooperate with each other to develop strategies for conservation of biodiversity;

(b) if so, the countries with which such cooperation agreement/ understanding has been reached and the terms of the cooperation agreement, and the specific area of biodiversity aimed; and

(c) the mutual benefits arising therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The seventeen countries which are rich in biological diversity and associated traditional knowledge and have formed the group known as the Like-Minded Megadiverse Countries (LMMC) are: Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, and Venezuela. The Group has agreed to join efforts for effectively negotiating the development of an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing arising out of the use of these resources, under the aegis of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

(c) Formation of the Group of the LMMCs has provided the member countries an effective platform to negotiate with the developed countries, the terms and conditions for ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits as envisaged under the Convention on Biological Diversity.